

Message Text

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ORIGIN INR-07

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DRAFTED BY INR/OIL: C C MOOR:MP

APPROVED BY INR/DDC: W MCAFEE

ARA/RPP - COL. QUIGG

ARA/ECA - MR. ZIMMERMAN

ARA/ECA - MR. RONDEN

INR/OIL - W C JONES

INR/OIL - R G LONG

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P 092139Z AUG 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY

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STADIS//////////

FOR CHARGE FROM INR/DDC/WM. MCAFEE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MILI, PINR, AR

SUBJECT: ASSIGNMENT OF DATT

REF: BUENOS AIRES 4999

1. UPON RECEIPT OF YOUR TELEGRAM WE EXPLORED WITH DIA THE AVAILABILITY OF A QUALIFIED ARMY OFFICER TO REPLACE COL. COUGHLIN AS WELL AS THE FEASIBILITY OF CHANGING THE SERVICE ALLOCATION. AS YOU UNDOUBTEDLY KNOW, FOLLOWING A LONG AND ARDUOUS STUDY, THE JCS OBTAINED INTER-SERVICE AGREEMENT ON A WORLD WIDE SERVICE ALLOCATION FOR DATT POSTS. THE DECISION WAS MADE WITH A VIEW TO ASSURING

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ALL THREE SERVICES A FAIR PROPORTION OF THE SENIOR POSITIONS; THUS THE RATIO IS ROUGHLY 50 PERCENT ARMY, 25 PERCENT NAVY AND 25 PERCENT AIR. THERE ARE, WE DO NOT DENY, ANOMALIES IN SOME COUNTRIES AS IN ARGENTINA, WHERE THE DATT IS AIR AND THE POLITICALLY MOST IMPORTANT MILITARY SERVICE IS THE ARMY. THE PREDOMINANCE OF THE ARMY OBTAINS IN 90 PERCENT OF THE COUNTRIES WITH DEFENSE

ATTACHE OFFICES.

2. THE CASE OF COL. COUGHLIN AS WELL AS THAT OF THE PREVIOUS INCUMBENT, COL. STAPLETON, BOTH ARMY, HOLDING AIR FORCE ALLOCATED POSTS, IS UNUSUAL. COL. STAPLETON BECAME DATT AT THE PERSONAL REQUEST OF AMB. LODGE. AT THE TIME OF HIS RELIEF, THE AIR FORCE WAS UNABLE TO PROVIDE AN OFFICER WITH THE EXCEPTIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF COL. COUGHLIN WHO WAS AVAILABLE. THUS THE AIR FORCE ACQUIESCED IN THE POST AGAIN GOING TO ARMY WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE POST WOULD REVERT TO AIR WHEN A QUALIFIED AIR FORCE CANDIDATE WAS AVAILABLE.

3. DIA HAS PROPOSED COL. JOHN L. FINNEGAN USAF TO REPLACE COL. COUGHLIN. COL. FINNEGAN HAS GOOD AIR FORCE OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCE COUPLED WITH ASSIGNMENTS PARTICULARLY PERTINENT TO THIS DATT POST. FROM JULY 1972 TO JULY 1975 COL. FINNEGAN SERVED AS AN OPERATIONS TRAINING OFFICER IN ARGENTINA, FROM AUGUST 1975 TO AUG 1976 HE SERVED IN HEADQUARTERS OF AIR FORCE INTELLIGENCE AND THIS LAST YEAR HAS BEEN A STUDENT AT THE INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE COLLEGE. (A DETAILED BIOGRAPHY BEING SENT SEPTEL.

4. OUR EXPLORATION WITH DIA AND THE ARMY LEAD US TO BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE NO ARMY OFFICERS AVAILABLE WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE AS GOOD AS COL. FINNEGAN'S. WE EVEN DID A BIT OF PRIVATE, OLD-BOY, SLEUTHING TO NO AVAIL.

5. WE ARE PREPARED TO RAISE THIS MATTER TO THE UNDER SECRETARY-JCS LEVEL AND INDEED WE ARE COMPLETELY SYMPATHETIC WITH YOUR VIEWS. BEFORE DOING SO, HOWEVER, WE WANT TO BE SURE THAT YOU WISH TO TURN DOWN COL. FINNEGAN. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT COL. FINNEGAN, GIVEN A GOOD OVERLAP WITH COL. COUGHLIN, WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO ESTABLISH A RAPPORT WITH TOP OFFICERS OF THE ARGENTINE ARMY-THE INCREASINGLY DOMINANT SERVICE IN THE JUNTA. IF WE SHOULD PREVAIL OVER THE JCS RELUCTANCE TO CHANGE THE SERVICE ALLOCATION, DO YOU BELIEVE AN ARMY OFFICER THOUGH NOT AS QUALIFIED OR KNOWLEDGEABLE IN ARGENTINE AFFAIRS AND POSSIBLY WITHOUT LANGUAGE FACILITY WOULD BE MORE PRODUCTIVE? WE WOULD NEED ALL THE COUNTER-VA ING ARGUMENTS POSSIBLE BEFORE RAISING THE MATTER TO A HIGHER LEVEL.

"DECONTROLLED 4 YEARS FROM ORIGINATING DATE" CHRISTOPHER

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